



# Llanelli Community Heritage

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[www.llanellich.org.uk](http://www.llanellich.org.uk)

Dear Subscriber,

As you will have noticed from looking at our website we cover a wide range of local history "happenings" past and present, and are currently concerned with the following impressive (we like to think) list.

## Interpretive Panel at Bryntirion

Bryntirion is where used to be the old Workhouse dating from 1839. It wasn't up to much by today's standards, but it was considered at the time to be "infinitesimally (sic) better" than any previous provision that had been made for the poor and unfortunate. (Note the use of "infinitesimally" -- the writer must have meant "infinitely", unless of course he couldn't spell or, less probably, he was making a joke.

We have spent quite a time over this panel because, as is often the case, it is easy enough to pick up local gossip, but quite hard to find facts supported by sound evidence. It is due to be erected on the site as soon as the manufacturer has completed the work and planning permission has been formally granted.

## Vandalism

We try to keep an eye on all the plaques and panels we have put up, and of course the panels are particularly vulnerable. Someone threw a stone at the back of the panel in Felinfoel causing quite a dent, but it doesn't seem to have harmed the front of the panel too much.

The panel outside the back of Asda in the town centre was "graffiti-ed" with blue felt-tip pen. The committee member who drew the short straw has now cleaned it up, and we hope it won't happen again. It's a pity this sort of thing occurs, but, who knows, perhaps the perpetrators took time to read the panel first.

## Llanelli Star

We were delighted to be asked by the Llanelli Star, our local newspaper, to contribute a regular small column showing one of our plaques, with an illustration and a brief biography of the subject. The first one is Rachel Roberts. If this is successful, it could be very good publicity for us and a source of encouragement to others to sponsor plaques.

## Llanelly House

This is Llanelli's only potentially attractive eighteenth century mini-stately home. It has been in a derelict condition for many years, but is at long last in process of restoration. Those responsible had hoped to get lottery funding with the help of Griff Rhys Jones. (You might remember seeing his television programme.) In the end the bid was unsuccessful, but the project is now being funded by several organizations, so all's well that ends well.

We are actively supporting this venture and very much looking forward to seeing its opening to the public next year.

Note the spelling "Llanelly" -- this is because when the

house was built, and during its heyday and subsequent decline, the town of Llanelli or at least the gentry was pretty much anglicised. Spelling the name with a "y" was the English way -- using an "i" just seemed silly, or even Italianate! This changed gradually during the sixties hand in hand with the promotion of the Welsh language, and has been accepted as quite natural ever since.

## BBC Roadshow

We have had an invitation from the BBC to join in their Roadshow in Llanelli in July, specifically on their stand focusing on the Llanelli Railway Strikes of 1911. The BBC have delicately referred to the "railway strikes" but in reality what interests most people and some politicians are the riots which took place and resulted in the death of two innocent bystanders who had just turned out to see what was going on. The police and military were involved, and the whole thing was an object lesson in how not to control large groups on a hot day in August in Llanelli in 1911. We hope to provide some useful information for the BBC.

Known locally as the "Llanelli Riots", there was a move afoot earlier this year to commemorate the event by erecting a statue to the two unfortunate victims. We wrote to the local press suggesting that a more fitting tribute would be the repair of the headstones at the Box Cemetery which are in marble with lead lettering and are in a very poor condition. The suggestion appears to have been taken up, since the cemetery authorities are now undertaking the refurbishment.

We have in any case arranged to have a formal unveiling by John Edwards, our famous local historian, of a blue plaque on the railway bridge close to where the two young men were shot. We are planning it for Friday, 19th August.

## The Box Cemetery

Still in process is research for two interpretive panels on the history of the above which dates back to 1850. Unfortunately some of the early records are lost, and a number of the headstones are no longer readable due to wear and tear, ice and snow, prevailing westerly winds, -- and the high price of lead. Last winter's extreme conditions did a lot of damage which is of course irreparable, but we are lucky enough to have photographic records on disk of many of the older ones, and hand-written or typed records of many of the inscriptions. Very sad and frustrating is the fact that often we track down an interesting person, verify the name and date, find the grave number, and then arrive at an empty space where once a headstone may have stood but no longer does.

Dr Roscoe Howells is giving a talk at the Queen Victoria Club, Llanelli, on 21 June 2011, at 7.30pm, on the shocking state of the water supply in Llanelli 170 years ago.